

News from Ed Markey

United States Congress

Massachusetts Seventh District

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MARKEY ENCOURAGES ADOPTION OF AMENDMENT TO INCREASE AUTOMOBILE FUEL ECONOMY STANDARD

Says provision is consistent with National Academy study

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Rep. Edward Markey (D-MA) today urged the adoption of his amendment to gradually raise the minimum national standards for average automobile fuel economy to 40 mpg over the next 15 years. He plans to offer the amendment during markup of the energy bill in the full Energy and Commerce Committee, which begins on Tuesday, July 17.

"The National Academy of Sciences has spoken again," said Markey. "It said in 1992 that raising fuel economy standards for both cars and light trucks could be done, and it will apparently say so again in its latest report. There are no more excuses, no more studies, and no more delay tactics - the time to save consumers money, reduce dependence on foreign oil, and reduce levels of harmful pollutants is NOW."

Press reports on the latest draft National Academy of Sciences report state that:

Fuel economy of new vehicles, especially sport utility vehicles and pickup trucks, could be raised by as much as 8 to 11 miles a gallon over the next 6 to 10 years, with the extra cost offset by the savings on gasoline over the typical 14-year life of the vehicle. Significant fuel economy gains in all vehicles can be achieved with minimal or no weight reduction and therefore minimal negative safety implications. The car/truck distinction in the CAFE law has been stretched well beyond its original purpose.

The Markey amendment, which is entirely consistent with the reported findings of the draft National Academy study, would result in cumulative savings to the consumer of \$100 billion at the gas pump, cumulative savings of 239 billions of gallons of gasoline, and a reduction of 468 million tons of greenhouse gases.

Automobile fuel economy standards were originally passed in 1975, and the result was a dramatic increase in the efficiency of new car fleets. However, the standards have been capped at 27.5 mpg for new cars since 1986, and the exemption of SUVs and minivans from this standard has led to a steady decline in the combined fleet-wide average ever since. Current fleet-wide averages have fallen to just 24.6 mpg, the lowest level since 1981.

The Markey Amendment would raise automobile fuel economy over 15 years according to the following schedule:

	Current Standard	Model Yr 2007	Model Yr 2012	Model Yr 2017
Passenger Vehicles	27.5	31.6	37.5	Combined 40 mpg
Light Trucks	20.7	25.8	29	

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